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***Manner: ACCIDENT***

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Four hundred eighty-two (482) deaths were certified as non-traffic accidents for the calendar year 2003. The largest group of accidental deaths was those who died as a result of a fall, 43% (205/482). Of the 205 deaths attributed to injury sustained in falls, 81% (166/205) occurred in the age group 70 years and over. A large percentage of these falls were ground-level falls in elderly individuals, which resulted in fractures leading to complications such as pneumonia.

The second largest group of these deaths was individuals who died as a result of accidental overdoses of drugs and/or poisons, representing 33% (159/482). The largest percentage of these accidental drug deaths, 32% (51/159) were between the ages of 40-49 years. The second largest group, 25% (39/159) included adults between 50-59 years. Twenty-one percent (34/159) were adults between the ages of 30-39. Three accidental drug deaths were between the ages of 13-19 years and three accidental drug deaths occurred in infants under one year of age.

The 2003 drug rate number (159) represents an 8% decrease compared to the 173 accidental drug deaths in 2002, but represents a 28% increase from the 124 accidental drug deaths that occurred in 2001. A more detailed discussion of these deaths is presented in the section "Death Due to Drugs and Poisons".

Nineteen (19) deaths resulted from fire or thermal injury, a decrease from 22 in 2002 and 29 in 2001. Of the 19 fire-related deaths, 63% (12/19) were the result of accidents that occurred outside of King County. The injured were transported to Harborview Medical Center's Burn Unit where they died.

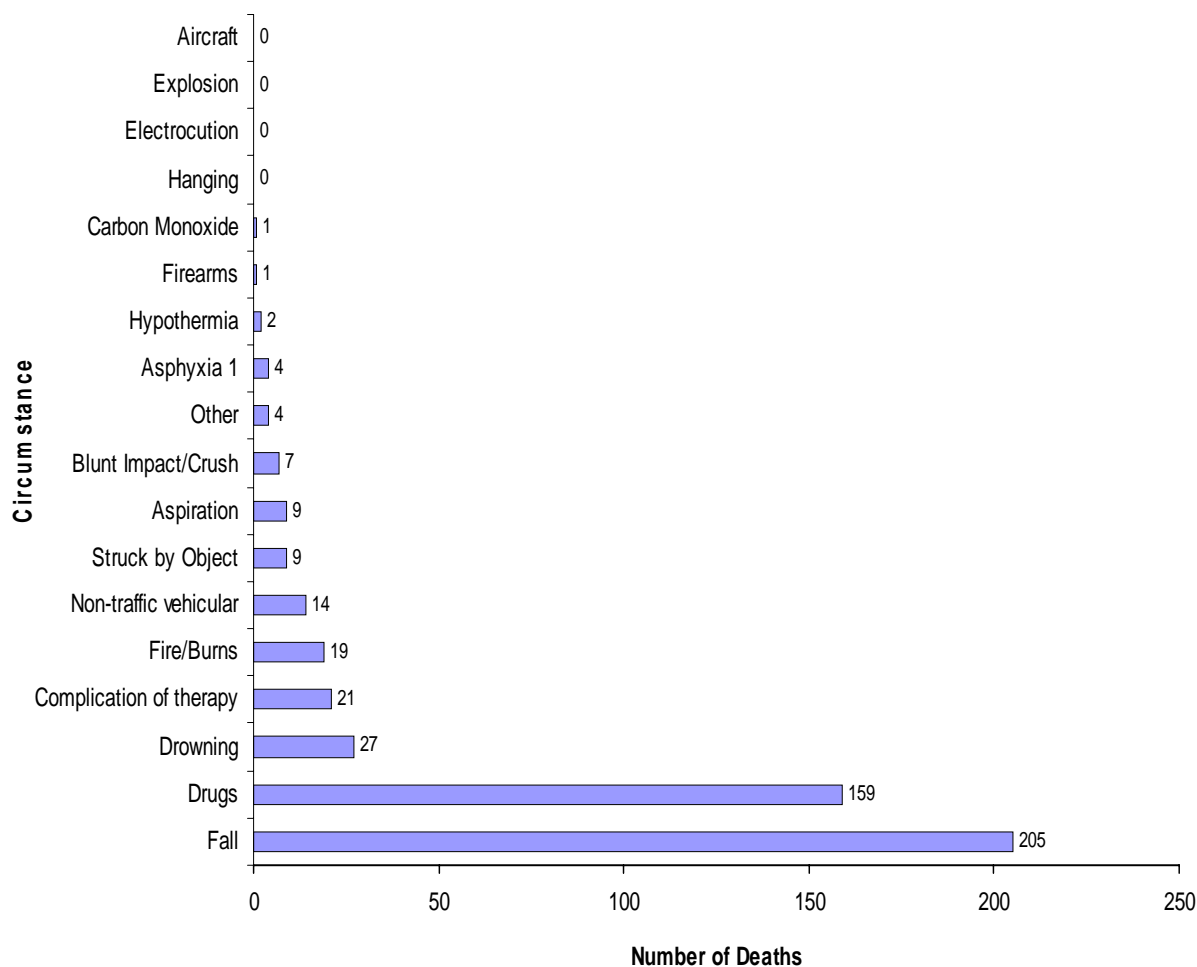
Another category of accidental deaths worthy of comment is death resulting from drowning. There were 27 drowning deaths in 2003 compared to thirty-two (32) drowning deaths in 2002, thirty-five (35) in 2001, and twenty-four (24) 2000. Three drowning victims were young children under 5 years of age.

A comment is necessary to clarify the cause of death listed as "aspiration". This type of death results from a person choking on a foreign body, often a bolus of food while eating. In 2003 there were nine (9) deaths due to aspiration of a foreign body compared to five (5) in 2002 and 2001. There were ten (10) such deaths in 2000.

Of the 482 accidental deaths in 2003, 21% (99/482) were the result of incidents which occurred outside of King County, but the death took place within King County. These deaths were the result of the injured being transported from outside King County to medical facilities within the county where they died. Since these deaths occurred in King County, they come under the Medical Examiner's jurisdiction.

Graph 3-1

## Circumstances of Accidental Death in 2003



<sup>1</sup>. Note: The category "Asphyxia" includes mechanisms such as compressional asphyxia, positional asphyxia, and mechanical asphyxia including suffocation.

**Table 3-1      Circumstances of Accidental Death and Race of the Decedent**

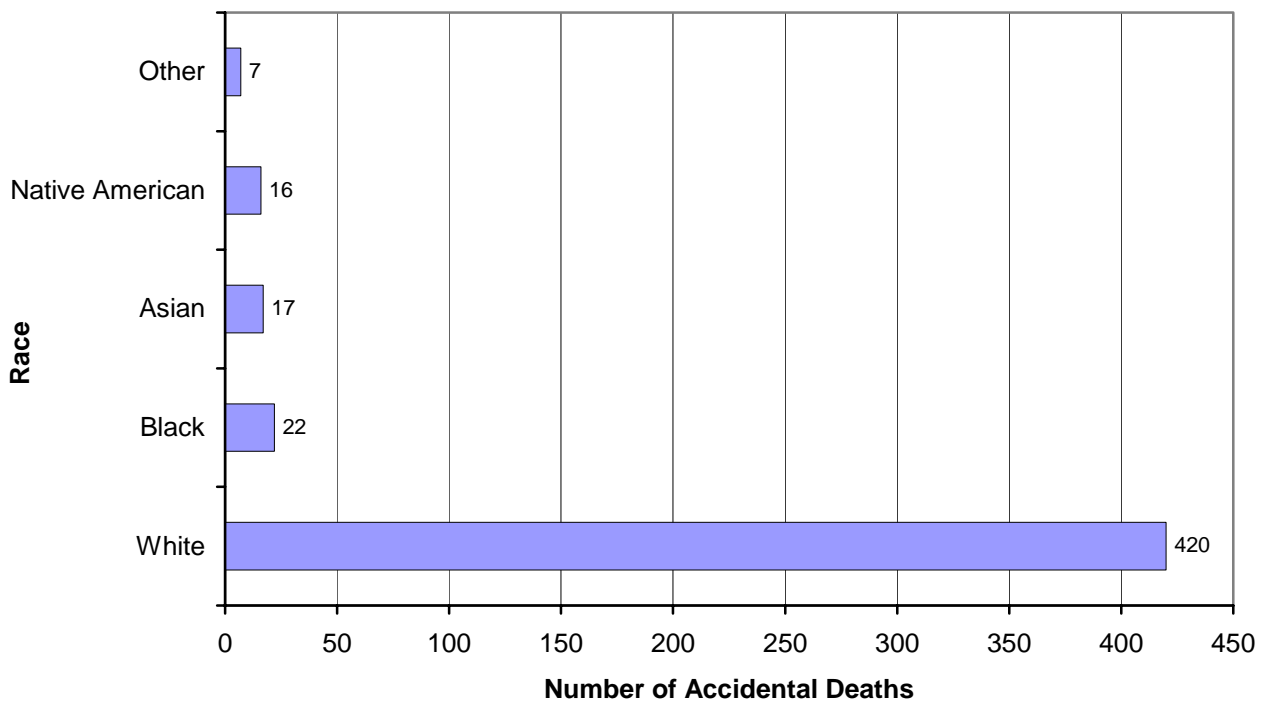
CIRCUMSTANCES / GENDER	RACE					SUB TOTAL	TOTAL
	WHITE	BLACK	ASIAN	NATIVE AMERICAN	OTHE R		
Aircraft Accident	0	0	0	0	0		0
<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Asphyxia (compress/positional/ mech.)	4	0	0	0	0		4
<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Female</i>	4	0	0	0	0	4	
Aspiration of foreign body	9	0	0	0	0		9
<i>Male</i>	5	0	0	0	0	5	
<i>Female</i>	4	0	0	0	0	4	
Blunt Impact/Crushing	5	0	1	0	1		7
<i>Male</i>	2	0	1	0	1	4	
<i>Female</i>	3	0	0	0	0	3	
Carbon Monoxide	0	0	1	0	0		1
<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	1	0	0	1	
Complication of therapy	19	1	0	0	1		21
<i>Male</i>	7	0	0	0	0	7	
<i>Female</i>	12	1	0	0	1	14	
Drowning	18	2	2	3	2		27
<i>Male</i>	12	2	0	3	1	18	
<i>Female</i>	6	0	2	0	1	9	
Drug	129	15	3	10	2		159
<i>Male</i>	84	8	3	8	2	105	
<i>Female</i>	45	7	0	2	0	54	
Electrocution	0	0	0	0	0		0
<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Explosion	0	0	0	0	0		0
<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Fall	188	3	10	3	1		205
<i>Male</i>	101	2	8	3	1	115	
<i>Female</i>	87	1	2	0	0	90	
Firearms	1	0	0	0	0		1
<i>Male</i>	1	0	0	0	0	1	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	

**Table 3-1      Circumstances of Accidental Death and Race of the Decedent  
(cont'd)**

CIRCUMSTANCES / GENDER	RACE					SUB TOTAL	TOTAL
	WHITE	BLACK	ASIAN	NATIVE AMERICAN	OTHE R		
Fire/burns	19	0	0	0	0		19
<i>Male</i>	13	0	0	0	0	13	
<i>Female</i>	6	0	0	0	0	6	
Hanging	0	0	0	0	0		0
<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Hypothermia	2	0	0	0	0		2
<i>Male</i>	1	0	0	0	0	1	
<i>Female</i>	1	0	0	0	0	1	
Non-traffic Vehicular	13	1	0	0	0		14
<i>Male</i>	12	1	0	0	0	13	
<i>Female</i>	1	0	0	0	0	1	
Struck by Object	9	0	0	0	0		9
<i>Male</i>	9	0	0	0	0	9	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Other	4	0	0	0	0		4
<i>Male</i>	4	0	0	0	0	4	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>7</b>		<b>482</b>
Percent	87%	5%	3%	3%	2%		

Graph 3-2

## Accidental Deaths and Race of the Decedent

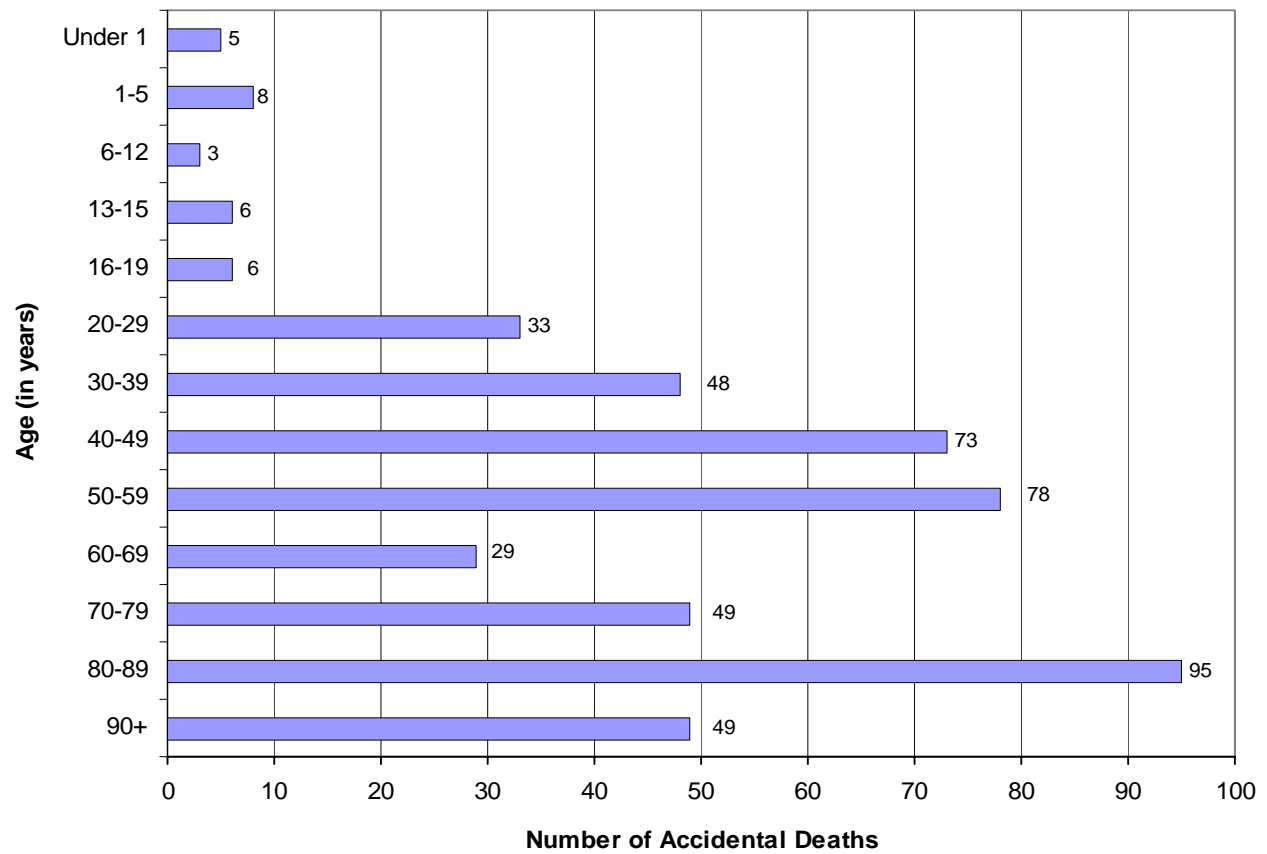


**Table 3-2 Circumstances of Accidental Death and Age Group of the Decedent**

Circumstances / Gender	AGE GROUP (YEARS)													SUB TOTAL	TOTAL
	< 1	1 to 5	6 to 12	13 to 15	16 to 19	20 to 29	30 to 39	40 to 49	50 to 59	60 to 69	70 to 79	80 to 89	90 +		
Aircraft Accident	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Male	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Female	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Asphyxia (compress/positional/mech)	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	4	4
Male	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Female	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	4	4
Aspiration of foreign body	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	2	2	0	9	9
Male	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	5	5
Female	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	4	4
Blunt Impact/Crushing	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	2	0	1	0	1	0	7	7
Male	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	4	4
Female	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	3	3
Carbon Monoxide	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Male	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Female	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Complication of therapy	1	1	0	0	0	0	3	2	8	3	3	0	0	21	21
Male	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	4	0	1	0	0	7	7
Female	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	4	3	2	0	0	14	14
Drowning	0	3	2	3	1	2	3	4	0	4	1	4	0	27	27
Male	0	1	0	3	1	2	3	3	0	3	0	2	0	18	18
Female	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	2	0	9	9
Drug	3	0	0	1	2	24	34	51	39	5	0	0	0	159	159
Male	3	0	0	1	2	16	20	31	29	3	0	0	0	105	105
Female	0	0	0	0	0	8	14	20	10	2	0	0	0	54	54
Electrocution	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Male	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Female	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Explosion	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Male	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Female	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fall	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	9	16	9	41	80	45	205	205
Male	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	5	13	7	23	45	20	115	115
Female	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	4	3	2	18	35	25	90	90
Firearms	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
Male	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
Female	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

**Table 3-2    Circumstances of Accidental Death and Age Group of the Decedent  
(Con't...)**

Circumstances / Gender	AGE GROUP (YEARS)													SUB TOTAL	TOTAL
	< 1	1 to 5	6 to 12	13 to 15	16 to 19	20 to 29	30 to 39	40 to 49	50 to 59	60 to 69	70 to 79	80 to 89	90 +		
Fire/burns	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	7	6	1	2	2		19
<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	6	5	0	0	1	13	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	1	6	
Hanging	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0
<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Hypothermia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1		2
<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	
Non-traffic Vehicular	0	2	1	0	0	2	3	1	2	1	1	1	0		14
<i>Male</i>	0	2	1	0	0	2	3	0	2	1	1	1	0	13	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Struck by Object	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	1	2	0	0	2	0		9
<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	1	2	0	0	2	0	9	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	1		4
<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	4	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>49</b>		<b>482</b>
Percent	1.0	1.7	0.6	1.2	1.2	6.9	10.0	15.1	16.2	6.0	10.2	19.7	10.2		

**Graph 3-3                      Accidental Deaths and Age Group of the Decedent**



**Table 3-3 Circumstances of Accidental Death and Gender of the Decedent**

CIRCUMSTANCES	GENDER		TOTAL
	MALE	FEMALE	
Aircraft Accident	0	0	0
Asphyxia (compress/positional/ mech.)	0	4	4
Aspiration of foreign body	5	4	9
Blunt Force/Crushing	4	3	7
Carbon Monoxide	0	1	1
Complication of therapy	7	14	21
Drowning	18	9	27
Drugs	105	54	159
Electrocution	0	0	0
Explosion	0	0	0
Fall	115	90	205
Firearms	1	0	1
Fire/burns	13	6	19
Hanging	0	0	0
Hypothermia	1	1	2
Non-traffic Vehicular	13	1	14
Struck by object	9	0	9
Other	4	0	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>482</b>

**Table 3-4                      Circumstances of Accidental Death and Blood Alcohol****Test Results of the Decedent**

CIRCUMSTANCES	TESTED		NOT TESTED	TOTAL
	TESTED POSITIVE	TESTED NEGATIVE		
Aircraft Accident	0	0	0	0
Asphyxia (compress/positional/ mech.)	1	3	0	4
Aspiration of foreign body	0	5	4	9
Blunt Impact/Crushing	1	6	0	7
Carbon Monoxide	0	1	0	1
Complication of therapy	0	11	10	21
Drowning	9	14	4	27
Drugs	43	104	12	159
Electrocution	0	0	0	0
Explosion	0	0	0	0
Fall	3	39	163	205
Firearms	0	1	0	1
Fire/burns	2	11	6	19
Hanging	0	0	0	0
Hypothermia	1	1	0	2
Non-traffic Vehicular	2	6	6	14
Struck by object	0	7	2	9
Other	0	1	3	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>482</b>
Percent	12%	44%	44%	